

# Traded To The Lycan King by MG Wattsons

## Chapter 156

\*Kyra\*

I wonder what it feels like to lose two mates. What happens to me after losing Hayes? Do I just not get to have happiness again or will I slowly waste away and die?

Second chance mates are commonplace, but second chance mates aren't rejected. Rejectable? Yes, and sure it has happened before, but it's so rare that no one really knows much about the aftereffects.

If that is the case, then this mission, whether or not I die, is my last just as much as it is Hayes. Or would he choose me, even knowing that a rejection places me in an unknown place?

My stomach falls and I press my hand to it, feeling the pang of disappointment deep. Would I even want him to choose me just to protect me? Old me would have had him anyway I could have.

But I know what it feels like to be truly loved now. The woman I am now knows how I should be treated, how a man should adore me the way I adore him. The last thing I want is a bond with a man who not only doesn't want me, but doesn't want to be alive. I scoff, shaking my head at the nonsense running through my mind. This bond is weaving into my thoughts, trying to control my emotions and me.

"What is so funny?" Hayes asks, causing me to look at him, startled, as I blink at him.

"Oh, I was just thinking in my head, that's all." I tell him.

"Can I ask you something?" He asks, clearing his throat.

"Depends on what it is, I guess," I shrug.

"Did you have a good life? I mean, after you left me - uh, I mean our pack. Were you happy?"

His question surprises me, but the tenderness in his voice catches me off guard. It sounds like he not only wants to know but that he cares to know I lived a good life without him in it.

"It was rough the first couple of years." I admit. "No one is all that keen on letting a lycan with no family into their pack."

He frowns as he exhales. "I was worried about that, but it seems like Tyler was very accepting."

"Tyler was..." I pause, smiling as I remember the first time I met him, the way his eyes lit up and he looked ready to scream to the world I was his mate. Regardless of his alpha being wary of the lonely lycan in the woods. "He was different from everyone else." "You loved him then?" He asks, and I chuckle.

"How could I not?" I say, a giddy grin still on my lips. "Tyler was...he was loveable." [SEARCH THE WEBSITE TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.](#)

"Can I ask how he died?"

The smile falters on my face and I glance away, my hands growing clammy and my heart pulsing.

"I'd rather talk about how he lived than how he died, Hayes." I whisper, clearing my throat from the lump that tries to form.

"Right. Sorry." He says.

Awkward silence fills the air between us. It feels like we don't know how to talk anymore. There is too much between us to be anything other than hotheaded or complete strangers. Yet, the comfort I feel when I am near him is unmatched by anyone else.

I don't know how to navigate a life without Tyler or the hole in my heart. But being around Hayes again, it feels less daunting, facing it all. And I hate knowing that soon, I will lose this too.

"Looks like the rain is finally stopping," I mutter, looking up at the small clearing above my head, hoping to clear away the remnants of our failed conversation moments ago. When I look forward again, I come to an abrupt stop, looking at the others who are standing at a raging river of water.

"Well, I suggest finding a different way over," Marcos says. "There is no way we are making it across that, not even in lycan or werewolf form."

"I agree," Hayes groans in annoyance before letting out a muttered string of expletives.

But I refuse to give up, not when I can feel it in my bones that this is the way we need to go. My lycan is on edge, snorting and snarling in my head as I move toward the edge, scanning the river and the bank across from us.

Movement catches my eye and I see

an elf with his hands looped into the straps of a bag as he stands, relaxed, smirking at us. I want to launch myself across, to grab him and end this now, but no one else seems to see him. My eyes meet his as he gives me a courteous nod and takes a step back into the shadows.

"Yeah, you better run, Ezra." I murmur and everyone around me goes silent.

"Are you going crazy and talking to yourself?" Nisha asks.

"Ezrah is over there. I just saw him." I say, rolling my eyes and I lull my head to the side, looking at her unimpressed..

"Are you sure?" Dean asks, and I scoff.

"Yes, I am sure." I grit out at him. "He knows we can't cross, and he must know there is no way to get over there until he is already gone."

"Ezrah!" Hayes roars in a taunting manner.

"Hayes." His voice is soft, masculine and airy. "You have finally caught up. Took you long enough. I thought you would want revenge quicker than that."

"It wasn't you who killed my mate." Hayes scoffs. "You were busy tricking Colette and Merikh."

"No, you are right. But I have the only thing you can use to get into the dragon kingdom and get your revenge."

Hayes' body goes rigid, his neck muscles rippling and his jaw clenched. My stomach twists with questions as I look at Hayes and the fury on his face. Revenge is always a pipe dream. Something that we cling to in our grief to keep ourselves going.

Not that I am above it or that I am not also hunting for it in a way. But my revenge is ending this war. Hayes' revenge is killing the bastard who killed his mate and then getting himself killed in the process.

"We just want you dead." Nisha says, popping her hip out to the side, her hand propped up on it.

"Fair enough. But you have to catch me first." He shimmers before his body seems to just disappear, and I bite my lip in annoyance. Hayes remains still, everyone watching him, waiting for our next move before he lurches forward toward the river.

"No, Hayes!" I scream, reaching out and grabbing hold of his arm. When he spins to look at me, his nostrils are flaring in anger and his eyes are full of murderous rage. "We need to be smart now, Hayes. He wants you unhinged. This is a game to him now."

"Then what do you suggest?" Koda asks, his anger barely restrained.

"We need to split up. One group goes that way, the other this way." I point to my right.  
"We need to find a way across, and quickly."

"I said no splitting up." Hayes barks out and I step in front of him, trying to talk sense into the fury riddled lycan beta.

"I can track our group easily." I tell him, "Finding them will not be a problem, letting Ezra get a lead on us because-

The ground creaks beneath my feet; the earth dropping a centimeter, making my heart lurch into my throat. Hayes falls silent, looking at me and then the others. Waves rage louder and I take a step away from the edge.

"I don't like how the ground feels," Marcos says, stepping further back.

Then Ezra steps out again, and there is no calming Hayes. He bounds toward the edge, my hand still in the crook of his elbow as he drags me forward and suddenly the earth falls out beneath us. The dirt seems to disintegrate into the harsh current, grass twisting and folding like cream into a mound of mashed potatoes.

"Hayes!" I squeal, panic flooding me as I twist away from him, my foot catching in the water pull me all the way in with him.

Someone clutches the back of my shirt. The water feels like it is pulling me apart. Sticks and various debris strike my legs and side as I grunt with effort to drag Hayes to the side. Hayes groans in effort as he reaches out and grabs hold of Dean and Koda's arms and they pull him up.

My shirt rips and I'm torn away from

Marcos as he screams my name and I go under the water. Hayes sprints down the muddy water's edge as fight to stay with my head above the water. Then I see a look of determination flash over his face as he shouts something and jumps into the water just ahead of me.

His arms wrap around me and I gasp, clinging to him as we careen down at an astronomical speed.

"Hayes, what do we do?" I ask him, sputter out the dirt and water in my mouth.

"I will get us out of this, Ky. I just need you to stay above the water line long enough for me to think." He growls as he lifts me up higher, forcing my legs around his waist. "Hang on tight."

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My face buries into his neck, my arms clutching to him like velcro on a toddler's shoe. It feels hopeless as he groans, our bodies crushing impossibly closer as I realize he has slammed into something hard. The last time I was this useless was when Tyler died. My muscles clench and my heart aches unbearably as I force my head up. "What is the plan?" I ask him, steadying my shaky voice with fake confidence. I am not helpless, I am not useless, and I do not need to be saved. Not anymore, not after the last time someone died for me. I have spent far too long training to clam up now. "I am thinking." Hayes growls out over the sound of rocks crashing onto rocks and water surging.

"I'll think while you work." I say, twisting around in his arms, searching the river banks only to realize that what I thought was a river, angry and full of debris, is not that, not totally anyway.

"Any chance you could think a little faster than?" He groans his face scrunching in pain.

"I'm working on it!" I say, growing more frantic by the second. We need to get away from the center where the current runs strong and deep. But how?

Then I spot it, a low hanging tree with a long solid branch as if our names were etched into it, waiting to catch us.

"Get us to the side." I say, tapping on his shoulder. My eyes narrow and set on our target. "Hurry!"

"I'm fucking trying," He hisses.

"Try harder, Hayes." I holler at him, panic rising in my throat as we grow closer by the second, yet we don't seem to move enough to the side and our only opportunity is about to be missed. "How about you carry us over there? Would that be better for you?" He grunts.

His wide arms sweep out behind me, our bodies all too slowly moving in the right direction. I lick my lips, leaning back slightly as I try to see if we will line up enough.

"Just a little more." I mutter more to myself as he groans with effort. His muscles grow taut and his shirt breaks free from him, his lycan taking over as its tufts of hair protrude from his skin. I grip onto the good side of his neck and look up, the branch dangerously close. Then I bite my lips, processing what needs to happen.

Not only are we not close enough, but the branch is much higher than I had expected. Even in his lycan form, Hayes isn't tall enough and with no real footing on the ground beneath us, there is no way for him to jump.

But I could jump off his back. The only problem is that if it's too deep when I jump, I risk shoving him under the water and into the current deeper below that will grip him and never let him go.

"Shit," I groan, clenching my fists as I try to focus. "Give in, Kyra. Trust your instincts."

I drop my legs from around Hayes, his lycan letting out a disapproving growl as he fights the current harder, trying to make it to the side. He stops moving his massive paws, finding my waist as he lifts me, and I fly up, my chest crashing into the tree branch as I scramble up and look for him in the mess.

"Hayes!" I scream out, my voice shrill and shaky.

When I see the shimmering scars on his body as he surfaces, I wrap my legs around the branch and swing down, ignoring the slice of pain in my skin. I let my lycan take over as she sinks her claws into the top of his wrist, gripping him tightly. The strength of the water is atrocious, a whine escaping my lips, as I fight to keep him in my hands.

He shifts back into his human form, his eyes meeting mine with a soft sorry in them. I can do this. I can save him if he would help me and grab my arm. Instead, he just groans and hangs helplessly, my nails making blood drip down his arms and over his chest. I want to scream at him. Tell him to move his ass, but in lycan form, the best I can do is grunt at him and how he understands.

"I want this," he whispers.

And then it hits me, like a ton of bricks. This is his out. He has fought to live so far and follow the alpha's orders. But this move right now from him isn't one of death, not immediately anyway. He found a loophole, a way out, and he plans to use me as a way to get there. Hurt, anger, and raw fury pulse through me and I find the reserves in my strength to slowly lift his limp body.

He shakes his head, giving me nothing but dead weight as he reaches up with his other hand and rests it on my claws.

"I am sorry, Ky." He whispers, his fingers digging into mine as he slowly draws one claw out at a time from his skin.

I try to fix my grip but it's too late; the blood making his arm slick as I try to reach out and catch him with both hands. He yanks his hands down as he disappears into the water. A pained howl breaking from my lips.

Then determination tears through me, one bigger than my anger and hurt. I scurry across the branch, leaping down from the tree as I break into the fastest sprint I have managed in my life. Dirt falls out beneath my feet as I sprint as close to the water as I can, barely staying ahead of the sections that seem to crumble just behind me.

I can't lose him. No, I refuse to lose him. Hayes could kick me out of his life all he wants but the thought of a world without him? One where he makes me be the one that takes the blame? I won't do it.

My eyes scan the muddy water, infested with trees and branches, searching for anything from him. He may have found a loophole, but he will still have to make an effort to live, right? He can't just give up. The alpha's order is too specific. At least, I hope it is.

Something trips up my foot and I

tumble forward with a pained cry, my ankle twisting violently as I force myself to keep moving, the stabbing feeling in my bone pushed to the back of my head. There is only one thing I can worry about right now and that is - I see him! Relief and worry wash over me as I see his body float up from under a broken tree.

His mangled pants are tangled in branches as it drags him further and faster away from me. By some stroke of luck, the log gets caught up on a massive boulder, teetering more toward my side. Each step feels like one step closer to success until I see the water tremble. A deep crack vibrates under me one that seems to make my whole body quiver.

My legs move faster, my eyes focused on the small branch poking out from the log that might just be close enough for me to reach. My claws extend out, my leg stepping

into the water as I hope t

hope, Close my eyes and clasp it. I yank, fast and hard, dragging it to me. When I look at it, I see Hayes' face down but close enough to touch. I cut his pants loose and drag him to the side, making sure to give myself the space away from the water.

I shift back into my human form, slipping around him as I press my head to his chest. I hear nothing, no heartbeat, no chest sounds, but the mate bond lingers ever so lightly. He has to still be alive if I feel it still. I rise up, crossing my hands over each other as I begin compressing his chest, counting and pumping. Then I stop and pinch his nose, my lips pressing to his as I breathe into him. Then I move back to his chest.

"Come on, Hayes!" I scream, tears falling from my face. "You need to wake the heck up!"

I move to his lips again, zero hesitation as I press my mouth to his. His jolts, water rushing into my mouth as I pull away and vomit it out. I can hear Hayes coughing and sputtering. His inhale is deep and fast. I turn, my lips quivering and my hands shaking as I fight back a sob. "You're okay." I squeak out, throwing myself into his arms, the tears flowing freely.

He shoves me off of him, confusion and anger coloring his face as he looks around and then narrows his eyes on me.

"What did you do?" He says, dragging a hand over his face. "What did you do?!"

"I saved you." I scream at him, rising to my feet, my chest heaving.

"Why?" He grits out, eyes full of hatred.

"Because you don't get to use me as a scapegoat out of life." I tell him.

"You didn't have to come for me." He says, forcing himself to stand, his hands on his knees. "There is no world, even if I hate you, that I would ever just give up and let you die, Hayes. Ever."

"It wasn't your choice. It was mine, for once!" He roars.

"Oh, grow up!" I scream. "Your mate died, so you want to die? Seriously? Get the fuck over it."

He scoffs and looks away, licking his lips before he snarls at me.

"My mate was unforgettable, unlike yours it would seem." Search the Findnovel.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

His words hit hard, and I stumble back, a hollow laugh breaking from me as tears fight their way out.

"Fuck you," I spit at him. "Get up and start fucking moving. We need to go find Ezra."

Then I turn my back on him and walk away. A movement on my left-hand-side catches me off guard, my hand flying up to protect myself as pain takes over every nerve in my body and my vision fades to red. "Kyra!" Hayes screams, his voice disappearing as my world fades to black.

## Chapter 158



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I barely have time to get her name out of my mouth to warn her, my heart pounding out of my chest as I watch in shock. I try to get to her, but it's too late as a tree swings wildly in the raging mud. Its branches reach out and toss her slender frame like a rag doll twenty feet from me.

"Kyra," I call out again, my voice harsh and loud. I duck under the tree as it's pulled back into the fury of the waves that rush by with no care.

"Shit," I mutter, eyeing the way the water seems to rise further, putting us in danger of being sucked back in. With the way the current is going and Kyra lying unconscious, that is the last thing I want right now.

We need to move away from this river or mudslide or whatever natural shitstorm this is. There is no time to waste as I gingerly turn her onto her side. She is limp as I collect her in my arms. Her warm skin is raised and already bruising as I sprint further into the woods. My lungs burn as I push myself to run harder.

I stutter in my step when I look down. The full force of nature's light showcasing the depth of her injuries. Kyra's perfect face is swollen, her entire right side bruised with a deep gash from her hairline to the top of her cheekbone. The Purplish hues make her freckles disappear and my stomach lurches, my fingers grip her tighter as guilt washes over me.

I hate myself, the selfish way I've grown in my desire to just end my life. These bruises, her injuries, they are my fault. Had I not been so blinded by my own shit, I might have seen that she would come for me.

I swallow the lump in my throat, licking my dry lips before I look away, searching to see where I am, and if we can stay here at least until she wakes up. I find a soft, mossy spot near a tree and move toward it.

Kyra groans in pain as I lay her down, her face wincing as I wait for her to wake up. But she doesn't. Impatience takes over as I lean forward to nudge her awake with a gentle touch.

"Kyra," I whisper, moving closer as my hand strokes her cheek, trying to bring her back to consciousness. "Come on Ky, it's time to wake up now."

It does nothing, and I groan in annoyance, running my tongue over my teeth. I exhale sharply, my hand falling away before I stand and pace back and forth. Waiting, and waiting...and waiting for her to wake up and yet she doesn't open her eyes, or even move for hours. I check her pulse, my fingers brushing over her soft wrists, searching

for any sign of life. Her heart beats strong and steady, and yet every time I step away from her, that panic that she won't wake up takes hold.

So instead, I decide to occupy my mind and get things done, opting to believe she will wake up sooner rather than later. Hope and patience are my only options now, and I'm not great at either of these days.

For a short time I leave her, verifying we are safe enough and that Ezra is not nearby or anything worse, like dragons or some other lurking enemy. Thank the heavens that none of our enemies seem to be nearby, and as luck would have it, I find a rundown car with grass and cobwebs for an engine.

I search it for anything I can find. The blanket is gray and holey, but the dust seems to shake off decently when I whip it through the air a few times.

Under it, I find a stash of broken suitcases and grab the few items of clothing that seem like they might work based on her size. Then I shove my legs through some jeans that are not the right size. I tuck the blanket under my arm and rush back to Kyra with a shirt and some shorts in hand.

Each step brings a throbbing in my chest of hope that maybe she woke up and is sitting and waiting for me. A strange desire settling deep in my gut to see her eyes and feel her gaze on me blooms and I can't hide the fact that I hate this. To see her hurt, unresponsive, again, is...making me go crazy.

As I break into the little area I had put her, a sick feeling of dread falls over me. Kyra's unconscious body remains exactly where it was, unmoved, as if she has done nothing but breathe and hold on to life.

Her naked body is covered in

goosebumps, the only sign that she is still clinging on. Her torso and chest are riddled with healing

bruises and her shoulders bare an et

deep red mark. She was struck incredibly hard, her head catching the brunt of it. Clearly why she is still asleep. I only hope that the internal damage is enough that her body can

heal it.

"I got you some clothes." I say, stalking toward her unconscious body, feeling a little awkward speaking to someone who can't respond. "If you wake up while I am doing this, I swear I am just getting you dressed."

I kneel beside her, gently sliding my hand under head and lifting her slightly as I slip a green oversized shirt over her head. My fingers skim her skin tenderly as I pull the fabric over her arms and down her legs as far as I can.

I move to her ankles and slip her feet through the holes in the terry cloth shorts and slip them up her legs. Then I grab the blanket and lay it over her. The exhaustion from earlier is gone as I watch her delicate features as she remains passed out with me on watch, sitting next to her.

Kyra has always been beautiful.

When we were younger, her freckles

reminded me of the stars, and most nights after she ran away, I would stare up at the sky and regret everything in life. I missed her, still miss her. It took watching her nearly dying a second time to realize just how much I hate the thought of a world without her.

It is captivating, just how much she has changed, all the while still being exactly who she always was. There was a time I wanted to kiss those lips until they were red and swollen.

A time where I would have given everything for her, a time before I realized we weren't fated mates. Well, that's not all that true either. Even now, looking at her as she breathes, the air whistling from her pursed lips... the urge to touch them is overwhelming.

I reach out, pulling my hand back as I hesitate for a moment, then I press my fingers to her swollen face. Her skin is warm to the touch, the bruise already looking better as the cut on her head is healing already. My fingers slip down her cheek, finding a freckle before I drag it to another, then another.

I could get lost in these freckles, just drawing sweet nothings as I connect them from one perfect little brown spot to the next. My fingers stop at a larger freckle just at the corner of her lip, and I find my mouth is dry.

This is why I had to reject her confession of love, why I had to cut ties. How could I love someone this hard when there is no bond? And how desperately would it have hurt her had I accepted her and found my mate later in life?

Breaking her heart was the easiest thing to do, as I knew I was protecting her from something far worse. Or so I thought, but not even I could save her from the pain of losing a mate. Hell, I couldn't save myself either.

I inch down, laying beside her as she shivers, my arm slips around her stroking her back as I try to warm her with my body heat. Moments like this, in the silence, where I

am lost in a time, where I was happy and not broken. I think maybe, just maybe, I could live a life after Leandra.

Maybe I could deserve it, if this

woman right here didn't hate me. Her lips press together, and then the part, a huff of hot air hitting my face and it overcomes me. Fuck, I have tried to block those old feelings, convince myself she isn't the same girl loved, but under that sassy attitude and strong facade is just Kyra. My Kyra, if I had let her be mine.

I slip my hand up her arm and over her shoulder, finding her cheek as I commit every second of this to memory. With the gentlest caress, I stroke my thumb over her lips, my eyes falling closed as the lightest tingle glides up my arm, bringing a smile to my face. Then my eyes snap open, my hand yanking back as if her skin is made of lava, my chest heaving for air. What the fuck was that?

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## Chapter 159

\*Kyra\*

Warm air brushes over my cheeks, a gentle feeling as if it were a soft kiss barely touching me. I feel strangely relaxed, safe, as I try to force myself to move. My body feels heavy, my eyes aching with a dull pain behind them as I blink them open, my eyebrows knitting together in confusion when I see him."

Hayes lays next to me, his eyes closed as the sun beats down through the leaves of the trees above us. His breathing is even and soft, his gentle breath heating my face as I find myself frozen, transfixed on just how much he has changed. I don't mean because of his burns, but rather the way his cheek-bones are sharper, his jawline tense and his lips... his lips look more tempting.

I try to turn onto my back, but I find myself trapped beneath his arm over a gray, dingy blanket. His arm lifts just enough for me to squirm and that's then I realize my arms are stuck inside the massive shirt I have on. My nose scrunches in confusion as I shimmy around, finding the arm holes that are twisted to the sides, before I push my hands through.

"Are you awake or having a seizure?" Hayes' groggy voice asks and I scoff, looking over at him only to see his eyes are still closed, but there is a quirk of a smile at the corner of his lip.

"Did you get me dressed?" I ask him and he exhales, popping one eyelid open, unamused.

"I did the best I could for someone more limp than a dead snake."

My mouth falls open, and I lick my lips, smiling even if he is trying to offend me to pick a fight.

"You didn't think to put my arms through the holes?" I ask him, waving my arms around in their newfound freedom.

"Figured you'd be warmer," He shrugs.

"You also tucked me in?" I ask, arching a brow, and he frowns before sighing.

"Kyra, you were shivering. What was I supposed to do, let you freeze to death?" He mutters, turning his back to me. I pause, nibbling my lip as I try to figure out how to say thank you.

The words that seem so easy somehow don't want to come forth the more I remember. I have many more things I want to say: curse words, questions, really snarky comments about his intelligence. But I push it all aside and clear my throat. "Thank you, Hayes." I murmur. He turns, looking at me suspiciously over his shoulder.

"What?" He asks, and I roll my eyes.

"You're going to make me say it again, aren't you?" I ask him and He lays his head back down, but not before I see a smirk.

"Say what again? You were mumbling, so I couldn't hear anything." He lies.

"Thank you for not abandoning me." I say louder, crawling over to him as I lean over his side to make sure he can hear me. Then I lean into his burned ear. "This time."

He flinches away, leaving me watching him with wide eyes as he scurries to a standing position, leaving me on my knees. I tilt my head to the side, my mouth tugging down at the corner.

"It's fine." He says, clearing his throat as he rubs the back of his neck and looks away. My stomach twists, and I look down at my hands, suddenly feeling uncomfortable, as if I have made a fool of myself.

"We should probably get moving to find the others." I say, standing. My legs wobble as I find my foot, the world spinning while my eyes close and I find my balance. A soft groan slips out and a gentle pressing at my back makes my eyes snap open. "Are you okay?" Hayes asks, his voice low and his eyes meeting mine, making my mouth feel dry.

"I'm fine," I croak, stepping away from him.

"Good." He says, giving me a quick, half smile before he turns and bends down to gather the blanket. His jeans stretch over his rear end, making it impossible not to stare as I bite back a laugh.

"Hayes?" I say and he hums in confirmation that he is listening. "Where did you find those jeans?"

He turns to face me, tucking the blanket under his arm before crossing them over his chest. Then he arches a curious brow.

"Why do you ask?"

I shake my head, a giggle breaking free as I press my lips together tightly.

"Just curious is all." I manage to choke out. He rolls his eyes and then looks down.

"Okay, yes, they may be a little tight." He shrugs. "Do they look bad?"

Do they look bad? I want to bark out a laugh at the absurdity of the question. Burned or not, Hayes is still a fine specimen to look at. Especially in jeans a size too small, riding low on his hips. These jeans are far from bad, though I dare say he may find them annoying on the journey. "You might be more comfortable in the nude." I shrug, "But if you want to waddle around in women's jeans, that's your choice."

He scoffs and looks down at his pants.

"These are not women's jeans," he argues. I nod, giving him a fake 'I believe you' look.

"Of course not, my mistake." Then I clear my throat and look around. "We really should get moving, though, especially if we have any hope of finding Ezra's trail."

He nods. "Yeah, I had a feeling you would want to go after him first."

"The sooner we find him, the better for everyone." I tell him. "Well, other than you, since you are trying to get yourself killed."

He gives me a side eye before he looks away. No denial of what I accuse him of. And even if I know that's what his endgame is, all of me had hoped he would try to deny it or change his mind.

"Right, let's go." He says, motioning for me to lead the way.

"Remember when we used to have meaningful conversations?" I ask him as I step by, leading the way.

"Vaguely," He grunts. "Why want to have one now?"

"Why are you trying to kill yourself?" I ask, no holding back. There used to be no wall between us, no worrying about hurting each other's feelings when we spoke as best friends. What needed to be said was said, and we dealt with the emotions of it as we discussed the topic.

"I'm not." He snorts and I shoot him a glare over my shoulder.

"Oh? So that begging to just let you go was just a joke?" I say, turning around to look at him.

Hayes looks down, a heavy sigh escaping as he slowly lifts his eyes to look at me.

"Can we not do this?" He asks, looking annoyed. "We aren't friends, and I don't owe you an explanation."

My anger boils, but instead of giving into his desire to fight with me, I give him a tight smile and brush my hands over my shirt, looking away.

"Noted." I mutter as I spin and walk away. "Not friends. I suppose that's the real reason you wanted me to leave."

"I never wanted you to leave," He calls out behind me.

"It's fine, Hayes. I get it now." I say and he groans loudly before I hear his footsteps, then he lands himself in front of me. His eyes filled with anger and annoyance as I cross my arms over my chest, daring him to keep talking. But he doesn't.

"You didn't want me to leave, but you wanted to never see me again." I finally say amending my original statement.

"That's not true either." He grits out.

"I know, I know." I roll my eyes, reaching out with both hands and pushing him gently to the side and out of my way. "You didn't want to break my heart when you found your mate, blah blah blah."

His hand grabs my wrists, his chest heaving as if he is suddenly struggling to breathe. [SEARCH THE FindNovel.net website](http://www.findnovel.net) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"That's not completely true either." He whispers, his voice hoarse.

"You plan on telling me any truths, then? I mean, if you plan on dying, do I not get the truth, eventually? Or do you just plan on hopefully telling me the next time you beg me

to let go of you and drown in a mudslide?" His lips pressing together tight before he shakes his head and curses under his breath, looking away from me for a brief moment.

"I couldn't be around you knowing you felt the same way. What I needed was to find my mate or have you find yours, so I wouldn't try to crawl into your bedroom window and claim you." He growls.

"So me leaving, our friendship ending, is exactly what you wanted?" I swallow, unsure how to handle the words he is saying. What I want to do is melt into him, but I have to stay in my anger to keep my composure.

"What I wanted was to wrap my

hands in your luscious hair and make sure you couldn't break away from my kisses. Mates would complicate any relationship we had and you," He shakes his head chuckling dryly. "Fuck Kyra. You would complicate any mate bond I was to have. It's not that wanted you gone. I needed you gone. Do you not get that?"

"And do you need me gone now?" I ask, my voice low and my eyes trained on his, trying to read him.

"I don't know what I need anymore." He whispers, his gaze drifting to my lips as I take a step closer, titling my chin up.

"You need a reason to live." I murmur, my lips a breath away from his before I rise on my toes and close the distance for us.

## Chapter 160

Sparks explode through my body, flooding me with warmth as my heart pounds in my ears. Hayes remains still and my stomach drops out, my cheeks heating in embarrassment and disappointment before I pull away. I stumble backward, my hand coming over my mouth

as Hayes reaches out and catches me.

"I'm sorry." I murmur, looking everywhere and anywhere but at him.

"Kyra." Hayes says softly,

"Shit, shit, I am sorry. I don't know what came over me." It's a lie. I know exactly what came over me. The damn mate bond and the memories of how much I cared for him. It was idiotic and I realize that now that I am in my right mind.



"Kyra," He says again, his arm yanking me to him as my eyes grow wide and I let out a confused squawk.

"Uh," I look up at him, feeling the air fade away around me as I watch his eyes scan my face and land on my lips before they crash into mine.

Electricity surges from my lips to my fingertips as I melt into him, forgetting everything else. He is harsh and hungry as his hand slides up my face, guiding me, no, holding me in place. His calloused thumb rubs over my cheek, my lips parting as I slip my tongue out to taste him.

Hayes' mouth opens, his teeth catching my tongue before releasing it and chasing me with his own. My arms slip up and over his neck, his hands moving as he holds me tight and kisses me like he wants to consume me. Butterflies dance in my stomach, my limbs feeling like they melt on the spot if I can't have more of him. I need more of him.

He breaks away in a flash, his heated breath panting over my lips as I lift my lust laden eyes to meet his. There is nothing but desire and unbridled need on his face, no regret or hesitation and yet, he presses his lips together and leans back.

"I need you to stop." He says, his voice a husky growl that brings an uncontrolled shiver up my spine.

"Why?" I whisper, leaning into him as I press my head to his chest, trying to catch my breath.

"Because I can't," He whispers. His hand glides up my side, over my arm and across my shoulder. Then he tickles over my skin with his fingers caressing over my collar bone before he gently places his hand over my throat and up my chin, lifting my head. "Say no, or I will not stop."

"I thought you hated me," I whisper, that snarky part of me unable to remain hidden.

"Hate has nothing to do with this," he murmurs before he captures my lips again.

I inhale sharply, my hips rolling into his as I moan in pleasure. His lips are softer than I imagined they would be with how sharp his tongue is. But I relish the way he doesn't hold back. The way his lips may be soft, but his grip on my neck and around my back says he is hardly keeping himself together.

He is coming undone just as much as I am. Hayes must be feeling the bond, too. What other reason would he have for not being able to restrain himself? Not that it matters. What matters is the way he fingers at the hem of the oversized shorts I am wearing. My breathing hitches when his hand slides up my thigh, softly rubbing my skin, his fingers brushing along the outside of my hip where, had circumstances been different, I would

have the line of my undergarments. There is no stopping the way my skin goosebumps with his touch and he lets out a barely audible growl of delight, his chest vibrating.

My head falls to the side, his lips moving to my chin, then my neck as he nuzzles and presses kisses to my soft flesh. I drag my hands to his chest, resting them gently as I roll my hips toward his hand, practically begging for more than the soft massage he is giving my outer thigh. I can feel his smile against my neck and my chest flutters with excitement.

"Mmm," I hum.

Hayes' hand leaves my leg for a moment and I want to whine, but his lips find mine again, his tongue tangling with mine as he wraps his hands around my waist and lifts me.

I wrap my legs around him, allowing him to carry us wherever the hell he wants. I gasp when my back presses against a tree, his hard body pressed against mine in a delicious way.

"Last chance," He whispers, breaking away to press his forehead to mine.

I miss his touch already as I shake my head violently, unable to speak the words. His hand disappears, and he reaches between us before he deftly slips my shorts to the side and his eyes meet mine. Heat floods to my lower belly as I watch him observing me. I moan as he presses forward, his own pleased groan making me sink into him deeper. My whole world feels like it is shifting on its axis. Everything I thought I knew seems to disappear as he rolls his hips into mine and I let out a loud groan. I press my head to his neck, taking him in the strides he gives me as I cling my quivering body to his.

"Fuck," he grunts, his speed picking up as I gasp along with his every movement. I can feel pleasure mounting, the way it seems to build steam and makes my toes curl before I throw my head back, exposing my neck to him.

"Hayes," I murmur, unable to say his name with any more force than a breath. "I'm so close."

"Ah," He groans, his arms gripping me tight as if he is dragging me onto him harder.

"Oh, oh...shit!" I cry out, trying to keep my voice down before he buries his head into my neck and grunts.

"Fuck, Leandra...yes...fuuuuck." He groans.

My heart stops, my ear throbbing and my chest burning. It shouldn't hurt this much. I should understand that she means something to him. After all, I had a mate I loved severely before him.

But...I knew who I was with. I knew it was Hayes who was making love to me in the woods. But then again, maybe my mistake is that I assumed we were making love and not just having a good fuck.

Tears threaten my eyes as my throat

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grows thick, and it feels like I might rip apart at any moment. Gone is the high of the moment as I turn my head away and gently press against his chest, disconnected us on too many levels before I stumble to the side and fix my shorts. I clear my throat, unsure of what to do, how to act now.

Does he realize what he did? Who he called me and how much it hurt?

"You okay?" he asks, concern filling his voice.

"Of course," I say, clearing my throat. "Why wouldn't I be?"

He doesn't say anything as I take my hair out of its ponytail, run my fingers through it and tie it back up, just looking for ways to buy myself time before having to look at him. "Was I too rough?" He asks, and I scoff, shaking my head.

"No, it was fine." I mutter, turning with the fakest smile I have ever mustered. He frowns at me, his hand on his hips as he tries to read my reaction.

"It was fine?" He arches a brow, clearly wanting to go back to our usual bickering. But I can't...what I want is space, but that isn't an option either. So I smooth my shirt and lie.

"Sorry, I'm just...can we pretend that didn't happen?" I ask him and he seems a little shocked before he nods his head.

"If that is what you want..." He offers, but I see the way confusion tickles his brow and his lip twitches into a disappointed frown.

"Hayes, why did you do that?" I ask him and he seems shocked before he chuckles.

"Do what? Fuck you?" He asks, the way his crass words make it seem like it was emotionless stings. Then he shrugs, "A guy needs a release every now and then, and you kissed me first so..." "Yeah, I did. I get that but...I just." I stumble over my words and he takes a step closer to me.

"Woah, Ky. You don't have to

overthink it." He smiles. I swallow and lick my lips, looking away and nodding. He doesn't feel it. My heart sinks. Hayes doesn't feel the mate bond, instead of that being some breakthrough, some...thing that might have potentially been special. It was a quick release for him.

It was nothing. Noted.

"I'm not," I sigh heavily. "Just...it can't happen again and I don't want anyone else to know."

His face grows dark, and he glares at me.

"You mean you don't want Marcos to know?"

My hurt demands I hurt him back. It's juvenile and idiotic, but I don't care. I want him to feel an iota of the ache he has caused me. So I roll my shoulders back and look him square in the face.

"Yes. I think I could like him and I don't want to live the rest of my life alone. He understands what I have been through."

"So does Nisha, Dean and Koda." he snorts.

"But they aren't Marcos. He has the face of an angel." I give him.

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